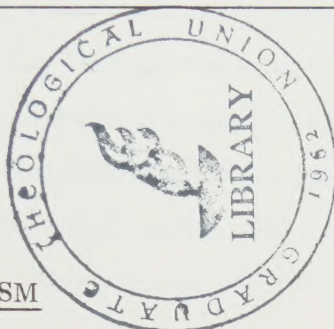


DEC 5 1979

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL/THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH/815 SECOND AVENUE/NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017

Walter H. Boyd, Press Officer
John. Drew Dearnaley, Assistant Press Officer

Telephone: (212) 867-8400



79285
October 11, 1979

POPE LINKS FAITH AND
MORAL ISSUES IN ECUMENISM

WASHINGTON -- "The moral life and the life of faith are so deeply united that it is impossible to divide them," Pope John Paul II told 250 leaders of American religious groups here.

The Pope's remarks were made to an ecumenical gathering of Protestant, Anglican, Eastern Orthodox and non-Christian leaders in a service of prayer at Trinity College Chapel on Sunday, October 7.

Official representatives of the Episcopal Church were Presiding Bishop John M. Allin, Bishop John H. Burt of Ohio, chairman of the Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations, and the Rev. William A. Norgren, Associate Ecumenical Officer, New York.

The Pontiff spoke of "the deep division which still exists over moral and ethical matters."

But he pointed out that "The particular climate and traditions of the United States have been conducive to joint witness in the defense of the rights of the human person, in the pursuit of goals of social justice and peace, and in questions of public morality. These areas of concern," he said, "must continue to benefit from creative ecumenical action, as must the fostering of esteem for the sacredness of marriage and the support of healthy family life as a major contribution to the well-being of the nation."

He said that even though much has been done in the pursuit of the goal of "perfect unity in Christ," there remains much more to be done.

"We must go forward with a spirit of hope," he said. "Even the very desire for the complete unity in faith -- which is lacking between us, and which must be achieved before we can lovingly celebrate the Eucharist together in truth -- is itself a gift of the Holy Spirit, for which we offer humble praise to God."

Though Anglicans and Roman Catholics have concurred on the nature of the Eucharist, the members of the two churches still do not share the sacrament. The two churches have also reached doctrinal agreement on ministry and authority.

The Pope praised the continuing efforts to achieve unity.

"I wish to pay homage here to the many splendid ecumenical initiatives that have been realized in this country through the action of the Holy Spirit. In the last fifteen years there has been a positive response to ecumenism by the bishops of the United States. Through their committee for ecumenical and interreligious affairs, they have established a fraternal relationship with other churches and ecclesial communities -- a relationship which, I pray, will continue to deepen in the coming years."

On the preceding day, Bishop Allin was an invited guest at one of the two receptions held on the South and North Lawns of the White House. Bishop Allin and the Rev. William L. Weiler, the Episcopal Church's Associate Ecumenical Officer for Washington Affairs, were among the 10,000 persons on the guest lists, which also included all of official Washington, the members of the House and Senate, the Supreme Court, the White House staff, top officials of the federal government, and supporters and potential supporters of President Carter from around the country.

"I know and appreciate this country's efforts for arms limitation, especially of nuclear weapons," the Pope told the large audience on the South Lawn after an hour-long private meeting with Mr. Carter in the Oval Office. "With all my heart," he continued, "I hope that there will be no relaxing of its efforts both to reduce the risk of a fatal and disastrous worldwide conflagration and to secure a prudent and progressive reduction of the destructive capacity of military arsenals."

Bishop Allin said of the Pope's U.S. visit: "Throughout his week with us his warmth and humanity were constantly in evidence. In his words and actions he said most of all, 'The Church loves you.' "

Bishop Allin said he was "impressed with the pastoral concern demonstrated by Pope John Paul II as he spoke to millions of Americans. That concern provided the real framework for the whole trip. The fact that wherever he went he attracted large crowds -- and, indeed, the attention of the whole country -- suggests the need for such pastoral concern."

Bishop Allin said that "It will take time to evaluate what the Pope said in his various addresses, but in a straightforward manner he raised up the very mission about which the Episcopal Church has been concerned: human rights, human development, relief for the poor and oppressed."

The Presiding Bishop said, "The ecumenical service of prayer at Trinity College Chapel demonstrated the Pope's pastoral concern, that he sees individuals, not just crowds. His sense of the pastoral relationship was abundantly evident there."

#

DP

NOTE: Photographs of the ecumenical service of prayer at Trinity College Chapel will be included in the DPS mailing on October 18.

